

real pay cut—cut—under Democratic policies. According to one calculation, only in one single sector across the entire economy did wage growth outpace inflation last year. That was leisure and hospitality, as those incredibly hard-hit sectors rebounded from their especially nightmarish 2020. Everyone else, on average, got a pay cut.

The average retail worker got an inflation pay cut; same with miners and loggers—inflation pay cuts. Construction workers, manufacturing workers, and transportation workers got inflation pay cuts, and on and on. Americans know that Democrats' failed policies are the reason.

ISIS

Mr. President, now, on another matter, last week, the U.S. military took another top terrorist leader off the battlefield. This particular leader had been ISIS's top militant since 2019, when American special operators introduced his predecessor to a similar fate.

I am proud of our special operations personnel who took on this dangerous mission. President Biden deserves credit for making the tough call to send U.S. servicemembers into harm's way.

Until this terrorist chose to kill himself and take innocent citizens with him, their mission had been to capture him alive for interrogation. That is an encouraging sign. If the past 20 years of counterterrorism have taught us anything, it is that just taking out top leaders does little to uproot their networks. This terrorist could have been a source of valuable information for destroying ISIS.

But this aspect of last week's mission also raises a question for our Commander in Chief. If President Biden recognizes the value of detaining top terrorists, then why are his staff still caught up in the longstanding liberal obsession with shutting down our detention center at Guantanamo Bay?

The White House said last year that closing Gitmo was "certainly our goal and our intention," but last week, U.S. forces undertook this mission that was designed to take this terrorist murderer alive for detention and questioning. So how exactly was the Biden administration planning to square their political quest to close Guantanamo with their stated intention to capture this terrorist alive? Where were they planning to house this killer—a Holiday Inn? Did they intend to turn this guy over to a nonstate, third-party partner like the Syrian defense forces? That would have created new risks of another major ISIS prison break. And would his jailers have obeyed the Geneva Conventions? What if the Syrian regime—itsself a state sponsor of terror—retakes that part of Syria? Or was the administration planning on bringing him before U.S. courts, under article III of our Constitution? Did the FBI come along on the raid to read this foreign terrorist his Miranda rights? Was their plan to eventually give this sworn killer the same rights as U.S. citizens and risking

the possibility of a jailbreak attack on our own American soil? Or perhaps the correct answer—Guantanamo Bay—was their plan all along. Maybe the Democrats' virtue signaling about closing this important facility has finally given way to reality.

Guantanamo is a highly secure, humane, and entirely legal place to detain terrorists. It would have been the safest place to interrogate this terrorist, well within the bounds of the laws of war.

Any Democrats who want to shutter it should look closely at the reality of the Syrian defense forces' makeshift prisons, like the major jailbreak by hardcore ISIS figures that just happened in Hasakah. They should remember the massive ISIS prison break when the Taliban overran Bagram in Afghanistan.

So if President Biden is pumping the brakes on his own plans to close Gitmo, he should say so, and I will be the first to applaud him. If he isn't, he owes the country some answers about his intentions with last week's raid and our national security going forward.

September 11 taught us definitively that we cannot treat terrorism as merely a law enforcement challenge. I hope and pray it does not come to pass that this administration is forced to relearn that lesson the hard way.

This war against terrorists will not end simply because we hope it ends. It will require sustained pressure to keep our enemies off balance.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. President, on one final matter, yesterday, the House of Representatives introduced legislation to keep the Federal Government open and funded through mid-March. Avoiding a government shutdown in the near term is an obvious, commonsense step. But our military commanders and their civilian bosses badly need our country to escape the hamster wheel of chronic continuing resolutions. The urgent task of continuing to modernize and strengthen our military requires predictable budgeting and advanced planning. So I am glad the bipartisan, bicameral conversations about a long-term funding agreement are continuing.

Let me briefly reiterate some basic facts that are known to everybody here in Congress. I have been saying since last year that three basic boxes will need to be checked for a government funding deal to pass the Senate and make it to the President's desk.

No. 1, the agreement will need to honor the longstanding, bipartisan norm that spending growth for our national defense receives parity—parity—with spending growth for nondefense. We live in a world that is too dangerous for Democrats to go hog-wild on domestic programs and welfare. Instead, we need to refocus our attention on resourcing our great-power competitions with Russia and China in equal measure.

No. 2, any agreement will need to preserve longstanding, bipartisan pol-

icy riders. Again, this is just the bipartisan norm. The Hyde amendment prevents taxpayers from having to fund abortions against their will. Another rider prevents the IRS from weaponizing political bias and targeting citizens. In a 50-50 Senate, we obviously need to honor the bipartisan status quo on legacy riders.

No. 3, likewise, any agreement will need to keep new partisan poison pills out of the process.

That has been the big picture for months now—parity for defense, keeping longstanding bipartisan policy riders in, and keeping new poison pills out. With these basic things, a bipartisan deal should be achievable. Without them, it will be impossible.

I thank Ranking Member SHELBY for his tireless work. I hope our Democratic colleagues in both Chambers will fully embrace this noncontroversial framework, which has been clear to everybody literally for months, so that Congress can soon deliver the full-year funding that our servicemembers need to keep us safe.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

CONTINUING RESOLUTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, yesterday, our colleagues in the House introduced legislation that will provide a temporary extension of government funding until March 11. The continuing resolution is expected to be taken up as soon as today, and once it is passed by the House, I intend to have the Senate take it up quickly and in time before the February 18 deadline.

While negotiations on the full-year funding agreement continue, we will in the meantime avoid a pointless and costly government shutdown. This CR provides a little more time to reach a deal for a spending package. It is the responsible and prudent path forward that eliminates the risk of a shutdown.

My colleagues have made good progress, and I am optimistic that Democrats and Republicans can soon arrive at a top-line deal for an omnibus. I am more confident than ever before that we can reach agreement for an omnibus by March 11, which is far more preferable to the alternative, a CR for the rest of the year.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, now on nominations, today, the Senate will continue focusing our responsibility to confirm more of President Biden's nominees.

By the end of today, we expect to finish the confirmation of four more nominees, including Amy Gutmann to

serve in the pivotal role as U.S. Ambassador to Germany.

For the information of all Senators, there is a strong likelihood that a significant number of additional votes will be held later today. If so, we want to make sure things keep moving briskly on the floor. Just as we did last week, I ask my colleagues to cast their votes quickly, to remain in their seats or near the floor as much as possible, and to be flexible in order to prevent extended delays. We did a good job of it last week, so let's continue the pace this evening as well when we move forward on more votes.

Off the floor, it is an important day for my home State of New York when it comes to nominations. A few moments ago, it was my honor to come before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and introduce Assemblyman Nick Perry to serve as Ambassador to Jamaica. I was also proud to introduce Randi Charno Levine to serve as U.S. Ambassador to Portugal. It would be impossible—impossible—to find a better fit for Ambassador to Jamaica than my friend Nick Perry, whom I urged the Biden administration to select for the post.

Assemblyman Perry represents so much of what is good and promising about America: He is an immigrant; he is an Army veteran; he is a graduate of Brooklyn College and one of New York's leading voices fighting for working families. He is a very, very familiar face in Brooklyn because he likes to do politics the old-fashioned way: shake hands, show up as much as possible, and just listen to people's stories.

When confirmed, Assemblyman Perry would make history as the first ever native-born Jamaican to serve as U.S. Ambassador. It is a truly important milestone and one that is long overdue, and it makes Brooklyn particularly proud.

When I go through Brooklyn, I sometimes ask my constituents, particularly at the West Indian Day Parade, I ask them: What is the largest island in the Caribbean? I tell him it is a trick question. Some people say Cuba. Some people say Haiti. Some people say Barbados.

I say, no, Brooklyn is the largest island in the Caribbean because we have more Caribbean immigrants than just about anywhere else. And that is why Brooklyn, particularly, is so proud that Nick is going to become our Ambassador to Jamaica. Not only is he Jamaican-born, but he is a Brooklynite through and through.

From Patrick Ewing to KRS-One, from Vice President KAMALA HARRIS to Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE, to the late General Powell, Jamaican Americans hold a key place in our Nation's rich legacy. Nick Perry will continue to add to this legacy, as he has for decades. So I am so proud to support him and to recommend him as nominee for Ambassador to Jamaica.

This morning, it was also my honor to introduce Randi Levine to become

only the second woman to ever serve as Ambassador to Portugal. I have known Randi and her husband Jeff for over 30 years. They have been longtime advocates for many different communities across New York, especially our Jewish population.

As chair of the Meridian Center for Cultural Diplomacy here in Washington, Randi has also been one of our top leaders for promoting cultural exchanges between students, diplomats, and business leaders. In other words, she has already advanced—in a different context—the work that any good Ambassador must accomplish: encouraging and fostering understanding between our country and people around the world. I have every bit of confidence that Randi will represent the United States with distinction as an ambassador to Portugal, and she has my most enthusiastic support.

Finally, I also want to recognize and commend the nomination of Professor Deborah Lipstadt to serve as the State Department's Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, a position that carries the rank of Ambassador.

Dr. Lipstadt's leadership is desperately needed. The malicious poison of anti-Semitism must be confronted whenever it rears its ugly head. We have seen a spike of anti-Semitism here at home and abroad, making this position exceedingly important.

As one of the Nation's top scholars on the Holocaust and on modern-day anti-Semitism, Dr. Lipstadt ought to be confirmed as soon as possible, and I am glad she is receiving her confirmation hearing today.

FORCED ARBITRATION

Mr. President, now last, on forced arbitration, last night, Congress took an important and overwhelmingly bipartisan step forward in the fight to eliminate forced arbitration for victims of sexual harassment and assault.

By a large, large margin—335 to 97—our House colleagues approved legislation that, for the first time ever, would ensure people who face sexual harassment or assault at work have the freedom to hold employers accountable in court. It would eliminate the long-used practice of including forced arbitration clauses in employee contracts, which, for so long, have effectively served as a condition for employment.

I commend my House colleagues for approving forced arbitration legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support. If you look at the vote, it is pretty clear that a majority of both parties voted for this legislation.

It is my intention to move on this bill as quickly as we can in the Senate, and we hope to take action here on the floor as soon as this week. I expect it will be met with nothing less than broad support from both parties, enabling us to move quickly.

The legislation has been years in the works, and I want to recognize my friend Senator GILLIBRAND, who has spearheaded the cause of ending forced

arbitration on this issue for a long time. Thanks to her leadership, we are close to seeing this change become law.

I also want to recognize Senator GRAHAM. Because of his backing and his work with Senator GILLIBRAND, this proposal has gotten the momentum it needs to move forward.

Despite disagreements on both sides, legislation like this is a prime example of both parties finding a way to work together on legislation that will make a tangible difference in people's lives. We want to work with our Republican colleagues on similar proposals whenever possible because at the end of the day, ending forced arbitration for sexual harassment and assault is about making our workplaces safer, holding abusive employers accountable, and making sure that every American can exercise their right to justice in a court of law.

For decades, abusers have used arbitration as a shield for their horrific behavior. Employees have been put at massive disadvantage when trying to hold wrongdoers accountable. This law will finally change all that.

I look forward to finishing the work of passing this bill through the Senate and getting it closer to the President's desk.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

U.S. SUPREME COURT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am sure that you, more than most Members of the Senate, remember our debate a few weeks ago on the Voting Rights Act. I remember your statement on the floor. It was powerful and really spoke to the truth of why we were meeting and debating this issue.

We realize that, sadly, since the Civil War, when African Americans were finally given the right to vote, this has been a battle every year since. And yesterday, the Supreme Court decision tells us that we still have a battle to fight when it comes to voting rights in America.

By a 5-to-4 vote yesterday, the Supreme Court's conservative majority allowed Alabama lawmakers to move forward with a congressional districting map that diminishes the power of Black voters in a State where Black Americans account for more than 25 percent of the population.

You see, this case had been considered by a three-judge district court panel in Alabama, and they ruled in a unanimous decision that the map likely violated the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and they ruled that we should block that map because it would violate the right to vote of African Americans.

I might say, for the record, this three-judge panel, two of the three judges were appointed by former President Trump, and yet they came to that conclusion. So the Supreme Court had a decision of whether to go along with this three-judge panel and stop the implementation of this map until they